DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 315 798 CS 506 901

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TITLE Majority and Minority Women in Communication Departments: Expectation, Experience, and Exploitation.
PUB DATE 20 Nov 89
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (75th, San Francisco, CA, November 18-21, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Faculty Mobility; *Females; Higher Education; Minority Groups; Minority Group Teachers; Nontenured Faculty; *Part Time Employment; *Speech Communication; *Teacher Supply and Demand
IDENTIFIERS *Educators; *Speech Departments

ABSTRACT

Since the early 1970s the composition of faculty in communication departments and in higher education in general has changed dramatically. A review of the literature shows that increasingly, part-time instructors have come to dominate faculties in roles that have shifted from occasionally offering an outside specialty to regularly replacing full-time faculty members. Women and minorities currently comprise the majority of this part-time faculty, most often found in lower ranks at less prestigious institutions. Based on current trends, the prevalent prediction for the next 20 years is that women will continue to inundate lower and part-time faculty ranks and suffer the brunt of economic constraints in education. The challenge of the future is to integrate part-time faculty, tapping their talents and energies, while providing them with institutional support and commitment to the extent allowed by the marketplace. (Thirty-four references are attached.) (KEH)

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MAJORITY AND MINORITY WOMEN IN COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS: EXPECTATION, EXPERIENCE, AND EXPLOITATION

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Presented at the seventy-fifth annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association in San Francisco, California, November 20, 1989.

CS506901

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MAJORITY AND MINORITY WOMEN IN COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS: EXPECTATION, EXPERIENCE, AND EXPLOITATION

The role of women in education has become increasingly felt in the ranks of the short-term, non-tenure track appointments which constitute part-time employment. Prior to the mid-60's such faculty arrangements were considered to enhance regular teaching with specialized and expert instruction. Today, pressured by financial uncertainties, forecasts of declining student enrollments, and restrictive federal aid policies, institutions of higher education have increased their reliance on part-time faculty for full-time instruction (Bowen and Schuster 61). Combine with this the predicted boom in community colleges and the expansion of life-long learning centers which heavily utilize part-time instructors and the future will undoubtedly continue to include part-timers (Bowen and Schuster 61).

Much been written about minorities as educators, less about the role of women in education (Finkelstein 300; Mathis 23). Much has also been written about the role of part-time instructors in academia; however, the make up of these part-time educators has received little attention (Biles and Tuchman 3; Mathis 23).

To the extent that this phenomenon has occurred across the nation in higher education, it is also reflected in most major departments of communication. This paper focuses on the scope of the problem, the reasons increasing numbers of women are found in the lower ranks of the profession, and the effects of this concentration of women in part-time appointments on the profession. Some suggestions for meeting future challenges are also offered.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Before attempting to address the issue of part-time employment, it is useful to acknowledge the definitions which have guided past researchers. Various labels have historically been applied to such appointments including instructorships, adjunct faculty, visiting professors, guest lecturers, and so on. The types of part-time instructors and labels for these categories have been described and documented at length in multiple publications (Biles and Tuchman 11-13). Normally, part-time instruction has meant all faculty employed to teach less than the full-time teaching load. Of course, this may vary from one institution to another depending upon the full-time equivalent. However, the relationship remains constant; part-time instructors teach less than their full-time colleagues.

Several scholars have defined the relational aspect of part-time employment as a more critical variable than the number of hours in the classroom. Robert M. Smith, for example, writes:

"All faculty who have a tenuous appointment and less than a reciprocal career commitment with the institution can be considered part-time. It is the psychological, not the economic, commitment between the person and the institution that makes a difference in their relationship (Smith 61)." Both the employment and the relational aspects of part-time employment merit examination.

Within academia, the overall trend toward employing part-time instructors began in the early 1970's. From 1972 to 1976, almost 5,000 full-time instructors were replaced by an equivalent number of part-time instructors (Finkelstein 285). In 1970-1971 full-to part-time faculty ratios stood at 3.5 to 1. This ratio dropped to 2.1 to 1 by 1982-1983 (Bowen and Schuster 6). The shift in junior colleges and community colleges is even more significant. Part-time instructors are now the majority of all faculty, constituting approximately 67% of all community college faculty.[1]

Within this majority of part-timers at all levels, approximately 38.7% to 52% are women (Myers 61). Caucasian part-timers constituted 91.7% of a recent sample of 10,000 part-timers while blacks added only 3.1% to those ranks. Asian part-timers are found in larger percentages than their presence in the total population and American Indians are almost nonexistent (Bok 104). As might be expected, women represent a majority of those part-timers who are principally homemakers or employed part-time while seeking full-time employment. One researcher suggests that this may indicate that more women than men have difficulty finding full-time employment (Finkelstein 287).

Accompanying the domination of women in part-time instruction, it is not surprising to find that most (91.0%) are unranked or outside the normal channels of academic advancement. This includes instructors, lecturers, assistant instructors, adjuncts, visiting professors and other job classifications. Few (19.7%) hold terminal degrees in their fields; most of these moonlight or are semi-retired professionals (Finkelstein 289). Women are much more likely to hold part-time positions than full-time employment. In a typical year (1981-1982), women accounted for 36% of the part-time positions and only 27% of full-time employment in higher education (Bowen and Schuster 56).

In addition to their segregation at the lower end of the academic hierarchy, women are found more often at less prestigious four-year colleges. They are less abundant at major universities and especially scarce at major research institutions (Finkelstein 295; Bowen and Schuster 56; Graybeal 18; Lipset and Ladd 38). Affirmative action laws and increasing number of Ph.D.s awarded to women have made some difference in the total number of women hired, but not in their distribution across disciplines, ranks, and types of educational institutions (Finkelstein 297; Pearson and Trent 70; Myers 60).

Over half of all female faculty members can be found in four traditionally overcrowded, stereotyped fields--the performing arts (including art, drama, and music), foreign languages, health-related professions, and English (Finkelstein 296; Lipset and Ladd 39-40). In such overcrowded disciplines women show fewer gains in promotion and tenure and larger salary discrepancies when compared to their male colleagues. In addition, there is a strong tendency for these disparities to widen over the course of an academic career. Based on data collected from a nation-wide survey, Martin Finkelstein comes to this conclusion, "Overall, academic women fare worse in the traditional arts and sciences than in the professions. . . the disparity increases as the proportion of females in the discipline increases. . . (Finkelstein 299)."

Like the ratio of women to men, the proportion of minorities has increased in higher education from approximately 6.2% of total faculty in 1973 to 9.1% in 1980 (Bowen and Schuster 58). Black and foreign-born Hispanics have made the greatest numerical increases in academia, while Asians show strong growth in the sciences but modest gains overall (Bowen and Schuster 59-60). Several conclusions about women also hold true for minorities. Black and other minority faculty members cluster in select fields especially in social sciences/ethnic studies and education. Like women, minority faculty members are less likely to hold tenure and be found at prestigious universities and community colleges. Salary figures for black women with teaching experience are equivalent for white males. Black women with publication records are rewarded on par with white males (Finkelstein 301). So, while blacks enter the faculty ranks at a relatively low rate in limited disciplines, they are compensated very well, particularly if they are prolific publishers (Finkelstein 302). For the communication discipline, prolific is operationalized as the publication of six or more articles which places an author in the top 10% of the field (Hickson, Stacks, and Amsbary 130-232). The mean number of articles published per author in the Speech Communication Association Index was 1.86.

It is difficult to find large sets of data on part-time employment in departments of communication because incomplete or irregular records are the rule. Given the percentages of women and minorities in academia nationally, and the heavy concentration of both women and minorities in the humanities and social sciences, the total number of part-time women and minorities in departments of communication is certainly as high as the national average of over half of all faculty members.

More concrete data is available through examination of the overall profile the discipline. For example, in a 1981 survey of 949 members of the Speech Communication Association, Thrash and Jensen found that 33 male respondents and 83 female respondents were employed part-time compared to 233 full-time males and 211

full-time females (Thrash and Jensen 78). This ratio is significantly higher than the national average of men to women in part-time employment and also higher than the average number of women to men in full-time employment. At the time of this survey the numbers of men and women in the discipline were approximately equal (Cooper, Stewart, and Friedley 46). Membership in the Speech Communication Association is currently approximately 65% male and 35% female (Cooper, Stewart, and Friedley 49).

Examination of other variables reveals that the status of women in departments of communication is highly consistent with the national profile. Significantly more females than males are found in the lower ranks of instructor and lecturer; more women than men hold temporary or part-time positions; more women than men are represented at the lower end of the salary range. Conversely, more men than women are in each of the upper salary ranges and more men than women hold terminal degrees (Campbell 44).

INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES

The reasons women are most often found in the lower ranks of faculty and as part-time faculty are varied. Many researchers argue that discrimination based on gender is alive and well and identify the communication discipline among the strongest bastions of chauvinism in academia. Others argue that women, because of pervasive, insidious socialization pressures "Self-select" to follow husbands or become part of the under-employed (Finkelstein 302-3). One writer even suggests that men and women play sexually related dominance rituals that result from "memory traces from deeply primitive existence (Rieke 65)." In any case, it is clear that women continue to hold the lowest jobs at the least prestigious institutions with the weakest rates of compensation.

Among the most common conclusions about women and minorities in the ranks of faculty are these:

1. Race is less detrimental to the rate of compensation or faculty status than is gender (Finkelstein 307).
2. Evidence exists of tokenism (e.g. jobs reserved or set aside for women and minorities) and different criteria for evaluating women and minorities both as candidates and on the job (Finkelstein 308-9).
3. Women faculty spend more time teaching and much more time teaching undergraduates (Finkelstein 309; Lipset and Ladd 40).
4. Nearly two-thirds of black faculty teach only undergraduates; black women have higher teaching loads than black men.
5. Neither blacks nor women spend much time in research (Finkelstein 309).
6. Women participate less actively in professional organizations and form fewer professional ties than men

(Finkelstein 310). However, blacks network much more effectively than women.

7. Men are represented much more heavily in published research and grantsmanship than women. The disparity is greater in the humanities than in the sciences (Finkelstein 311; Lipset and Ladd 39; Cooper, Stewart, and Friedley 50). This difference between men and women is replicated in the gap between white and black rates of publication and receipts of grants. Women are less like to undertake pure research which is most significantly associated with high research productivity (Finkelstein 315).
8. These differences between men and women begin relatively small and gradually increase to a peak at mid-career. The gap narrows somewhat by the twentieth year after receiving the Ph.D. or terminal degree (Finkelstein 311; Lester 74).

Many reasons have been suggested for the current status of women and minorities. Enforced mobility when the spouse takes another job or its reverse, immobility due to the spouse's employment, parental and marriage obligations, among other reasons women often find themselves at a disadvantage in the full-time job market (Mangan A13).

The reasons black faculty share the status of women are less clear. Several theories have been advanced including the conflict of role that is, the scholar versus the community activist, the conflict between communication styles, and the personal and psychological toll of serving in a dual world (Finkelstein 321). Whatever the reasons, the results for both women and blacks are similar--sex and race constraints on the pursuit of an academic career are serious.

What does the future promise? The prognostications are diametrically opposed. One view affirms that part-time faculty will increase dramatically, the other argues that they will become a much smaller segment of the faculty. In order to understand how these opposite conclusions were reached, the changing nature of education into the twenty-first century must be examined. Education will probably be influenced by these trends:

1. Money pressures will continue to loom large and will, in most views, become even more severe (Daniels 22). As Bowen and Schuster put it, "The financial outlook is less favorable than at any time since 1955, and the conditions and expectations of faculties are correspondingly bleak (Bowen and Schuster 61)."
2. The shortfall in funding, in turn, will place a heavier burden on students via increased tuition. Eamon Kelly, President of Tulane University in New Orleans, blames basic economic forces which pressure university budgets, contributing to the continual rise in tuition (Daniels 22). Tuition will rise proportionately across university and two-year-colleges because of the

underlying economic factors influencing higher education as a whole.

3. The faculty pool will shrink, particularly in some disciplines. Some reporters argue that the faculty shortage will be felt most at community and junior colleges which have come during the 1960's to rely on the over-supply of faculty for four-year institutions (Daniels 22). The most recent data reveals that the biggest shortfalls will occur in the humanities and social sciences (Fiske 1, 20).
4. The number of students requiring remedial assistance in basic skills such as oral and written communication, math, and critical thinking will rise (Bowen and Schuster 299). Although smaller numbers of ethnic minorities are enrolling in universities, the United States has continued to attract increasing numbers of international students (Gouran 24-5). Institutions may be forced to shift scarcer resources into remedial programs to retain educational disadvantaged students (Lipset and Ladd 41). This burden will further strain budgets.
5. By the year 2020, it is estimated that 35% of the total American population will be composed of minority members, mainly blacks and Hispanics (Attinger and Cramer 64). In spite of this, the minuscule number of minorities who pursue graduate study will further aggravate the scarcity of minority faculty members (Bowen and Schuster 60; Finkelstein 316). The number of black students attending college has dropped steadily. Since 1985 only 26% of black high school graduates attended college. This number is down from 34% in 1976. Overall, minority college enrollment expanded slightly from 1980-1986 because of the influx of Asian and Hispanic students (Attinger and Cramer 64). If this trend continues, it means even greater disparities in the representation of minorities on faculties (Bowen and Schuster 60).
6. Pressured by images of their future bank accounts, students will continue to vote with their feet and pursue degrees with direct job applications. Business, computer technology, and similar disciplines will prosper at the expense of the traditional arts and sciences (Bowen and Schuster 60).
7. Overall student enrollments in colleges and universities will begin to decline by about 15.5% through 1996 and then will rise by about 14.3% between 1996 and 2011 (Bowen and Schuster 60, 297). The beginning of the gradual downturn in student enrollment has been evident since 1980.

Two dramatically different predictions of future trends have resulted from this data. First, pressured by falling enrollments and declining student populations, institutions will be forced to

cut faculty members. Largely non-tenured, short-time faculty members including the part-timers as well as those in the lower ranks of the faculty will be first to go (Bowen and Schuster 61). This has strong implications for both women and minorities. They compose large segments of the lower ranking and part-time faculty and will undoubtedly be cut in larger numbers. This further suggests that overall representation of minorities and women among faculty will be severely diminished. Minorities will continue to be severely under-represented at the highest levels in higher education and will lose ground attained during their influx into the lower academic ranks during the 1960's and 1970's. According to this scenario, the faculty of the 1990's and early twentieth century will be an entrenched, largely male, white, and aging population.

The second forecast is quite different. Given the need to achieve flexibility of staffing in a time of uncertain and rapidly shifting enrollments and financial support as well as the shrinking number of openings and a large pool of Ph.D.'s from the 1970's, institutions will shift to greater use of part-time faculty. The expansion of the part-time labor pool will grow in direct proportion to the gaps left in the tenured faculty ranks by retirements and from non-retention of tenure-track faculty. While this scenario is vastly different than the first one, it holds the same bad news for women and minorities. It is probable that the number of faculty members will decline gradually and faculty composition will change from stable, male, and full-time to transient, female, and part-time. The percentage of part-timers will continue to grow as institutions brace themselves for substantial retrenchment. In this case, it will be once again a buyers market. Relatively large numbers of women and minorities, recruited into graduate schools in the 1960's and 1970's, will be in abundant supply while the shrinking numbers of jobs will be limited to part-time employment. The institutions, through no fault of their own, will be caught in the squeeze between increasing costs and decreasing enrollments. They will find themselves faced with an oversupply of qualified employees and take sensible advantage of the situation (Biles and Tuchman 39).

In either case, the role of women and minorities in higher education promises to continue to be one of lower class, second hand status. Pushed out of full participation on the faculties of prestigious institutions and shunted into lower ranks, women and minorities will be the among the last hired and first fired.

EFFECTS ON THE PROFESSION

While there is divided opinion about future demand for faculty, there is even more widespread disagreement about the impact of part-time instruction on higher education. Views range from the claim that part-timers have undermined academic excellence to the counterargument that the only difference between part-and full-time faculty is the rate of compensation (Bowen and Schuster 63, 298). Effects on the profession can be

observed from the impact at the institutional level to the personal effect on the individual part-timer.

The profession has generally complied with the enforced affirmative action guidelines at regular faculty ranks. However, in advertising and hiring for part-time faculty positions, many academic institutions probably do not rigorously follow these guidelines. Part-time faculty are hired "based on a combination of availability, teaching competency, willingness to accept relatively low compensation for services rendered, institutional needs at the moment, and academic credentials (Biles and Tuchman 16)." Often, the demands of flexibility and other institutional pressures are great enough to make affirmative action policies a secondary concern.

The long-term impact will vary with the pool of potential part-time employees. With the current state of the labor market, large numbers of individuals are readily available, employers can be more selective (Bowen and Schuster 150). Unfortunately, they are also freer to treat such faculty with disregard if so inclined or to simply neglect such faculty (Biles and Tuchman 39). Because part-time faculty are more likely to be geographically restricted, employers can exercise a monopoly in hiring power in a local market.

The evolution of the part-time instructor phenomenon has been a rapid one. The result is that use of such instructors has grown without much guidance. It has mushroomed in an atmosphere of benign neglect. Frequently, the attitude of the institution is simply one of expediency. Relatively little time or emphasis is placed on development of part-time faculty and practically no institutional commitment is made to such faculty. It is not surprising that part-time faculty have become invisible in our midst.

Not only does the part-time faculty member suffer neglect at the institutional level, but the full-time faculty member normally views her with suspicion. In response to a study identifying the major problems facing higher education in the decades ahead, the proliferation of part-time instructors was rated among the most serious problems. Fully 80.2% of faculty polled expressed strong concerns about the number of part-time employees in higher education (Graybeal 6). Most thought too many part-time faculty were present in their institutions.

On the other hand, part-timers often saw themselves as qualified as most full-time faculty. Fully 49% of a recent survey thought they could teach upper division and graduate courses as well as full-time faculty (McMahon 67). In such an atmosphere of mutual suspicion or perhaps even hostility, it is understandable that the part-time faculty member does not find a niche.

In departments of communication, part-time faculty are most frequently used to service the basic courses. In this capacity, part-timers come into contact with the majority of undergraduates through the basic courses. While this frees full-time faculty for upper division courses, the ultimate result may be that the

basic undergraduate courses are perceived by the institution, the department, the part-timer, and the student as unimportant and possibly worthless courses (Dick 29). Such courses may be seen as lacking upper division course challenge.

In addition, the part-timer, realizing that she may be an expedient solution to a short-term problem, has an understandable response of minimal commitment to the institution (Bowen and Schuster 151). As a result, heavier advising, committee, and government responsibilities fall upon the full-time faculty. Exceptions exist, of course, especially among part-timers eager for full-time employment and graduate students who are considering teaching in the field as a career.

The effect on the part-timer is more elusive. Relatively few researchers have taken the time to ask, although anecdotal evidence at the departmental level is certainly available. Generically, the effect on women has been documented: Men's aspirations and confidence rise during their college years and employment; women's decline (Hall 64).

THE CHALLENGE

The reliance of institutions of higher learning on part-time faculty has chiefly evolved in an atmosphere of benign neglect. Biles and Tuchman conclude, "With the exception of the work of an American Association of University Professors (AAUP) committee, few formal documents have been available to provide a framework to guide institutions in integrating their part-timers into an academic work setting (Biles and Tuchman 2)." The problems associated with shifting composition of faculties may continue unless active steps are taken to control and direct the trends or, at least, to come to terms with them.

Many of the suggestions for women as part-time faculty members stem from research on development programs for full-time members of the academic community. Research on characteristics of effective faculty development programs is a very recent phenomenon (Guskey 2). The difference is that these critical survival skills for women are often neglected either by the women themselves, or by their colleagues and institutions.

A number of immediate steps can be taken at the individual level to enhance the role of the part-timer and make her a more integral part of the faculty community. Increasing the part-timer's sense of control may have direct impact on self-esteem, commitment and classroom effectiveness. Increased responsibility and limited control are key factors that increase job stress, depress productivity, and restrict personal fulfillment ("Statistics" 6; Fowler 46). The extent to which we allow them to vote on issues pertinent to their classrooms, choose their own textbooks, and participate in course improvement, we are increasing job-related stress. The lack of such minimal security has been demonstrated to affect faculty productivity directly (Blackburn 26).

In addition, the psychological impact is exploitation of those we control as well as devaluation of the work accomplished and worsening relationships between power-holders and powerless (Kipnis 34-6). To the extent that we can increase the amount of control and free choice available to part-time faculty, we can expect decreased disruptions in managerial relationships and increased work effectiveness. This gives credence to the argument that it is the psychological commitment between the person and the institution that makes a difference in their relationship (Smith 61). Some of the part-timer's dissatisfaction with higher education centers in the relationship to the university rather than in the work performed (Smith 61). The long term solution to this problem, selecting faculty administrators whose personal reward and comfort call for a minimum need to control others and providing a stronger voice in administration, would benefit both part-time and full-time faculty (Blackburn 26; Guskey 125).

Key in encouraging sense of community is establishing an early relationship with the part-time faculty member (Smith 62). Faculty contact in the first years of teaching is critical for launching a productive career (Blackburn 25; Mathis 21). In this way, the department can assess needs and establish rapport. Most strategies for improving the role of the part-time instructor depend upon a positive relationship established early.

Rudimentary changes can increase the sense of collegiality through which the department communicates its commitment to faculty. Concern can be expressed behaviorally through orientation sessions or workshops, for example, to increase time management. The part-time faculty member can be given greater control of environment, office mate selection, preferencing teaching times, and even information about parking or campus maps.[2] David A. Harris, President of St. Louis Community College, Florissant Valley, summarizes the problem:

> Because of the lack of appropriate and well-implemented staff development programs, colleges fail to make the most of the diversity offered by part-time faculty. Staff development programs should be mandatory for part-time faculty and institutions should make allowances by contract for part-time faculty involvement (Dick 30).

Mentoring and networking are also realistic responses to the problems plaguing part-timers, especially women. Historically women have failed to network or choose mentoring relationships as well as men and minorities. Prodded by institutions and departments, they can be encouraged to do so. The goal of mentoring and networking is both to establish ties and sources for creativity and research, and also to enhance the sense of inclusion and self-worth for the part-timer (McMahon 67). Much material on mentoring-networking programs for women such as the Rowe sponsor arrangement, the Weaver buddy system, and the HERS career cooperatives is readily available (Lazarus and Tolpin 29-

32; Gillespie 45-6; Pearson and Trent 71, 74; Rieke 73-4). Mentoring and networking should include the undergraduate woman. For the long-term, it is particularly important to support young women in their exploration of faculty careers, especially in nontraditional, less crowded academic disciplines.

Finally, feedback and open lines of communication are critical. These may have to be artificially induced, for example, by assigning part-time faculty offices among full-timers or by scheduling interaction meetings (Dick 28). However, it is important to recognize the value of part-timers' ideas and presence in the institution (Biles and Tuchman 128-9; Guskey 127-30). Faculty growth contracts (nonbinding and individual) are also ways to focus faculty attention on teaching improvement (Pfnister, Solder, and Verroca 33). Attention to the importance of teaching in the institution may encourage part-timers to become more involved, thus opening the channels of interaction.

Ultimately any step that will cause a university to improve the quality of its relationship with faculty will, in turn, improve the quality of the educational institution.

CONCLUSION

Since the early 1970's the composition of faculty in higher education has changed dramatically. Increasingly, part-time instructors have come to dominate faculties in roles that have shifted from occasionally offering an outside specialty to regularly replacing full-time faculty members. The trends in employment of part-time faculty members reflect the attempts of institutions of higher education to respond to financial and demographic crises of the past twenty years.

Women currently comprise the majority of part-time faculty members. There is no widely accepted explanation for this phenomenon. However, the dominance of women among part-time faculty reflects the over-all composition of university and college faculties. Women and minorities are found most often in lower ranks at less prestigious institutions.

Two vastly different views of the next twenty years are offered based on current trends. Both predict that women will continue to inundate lower and part-time faculty ranks and suffer the brunt of economic constraints in education.

The challenge of the future is to integrate part-time faculty, tapping their talents and energies, while providing them with institutional support and commitment to the extent allowed by the marketplace. In 1977, J.C. Burke wrote that,

> The real threat to the quality of life on campus today and in the future flows less from the financial depression in the academic spirit. This psychological depression springs not so much from a lack of money as from an abatement of hope and from an abandonment of will (Burke 388).

While it is increasingly clear that education is threatened on both the financial and psychological fronts, there are immediate measures for coping with the situation.

1. Finkelstein cites these figures: 52.6% at two-year institutions, 34.0% at four-year institutions, and 13.4% at universities, p. 289; Taylor cites 57% of total faculty are part-time while 44% of all institutions use part-time faculty heavily.

2. For suggestions for part-time faculty orientation workshops see Biles and Tuchman 130-133; Taylor 8.

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